

Afterword

Dust of Angels

I have already stated elsewhere that I was once a very active Radio Ham, as well as an enthusiastic constructor of “home-brew” electronic equipment. I have found in the past how difficult it is difficult to convey to non-enthusiasts the interest or excitement of being able to put together something yourself which actually works – which really does perform a useful function.

Justifiably, perhaps, this hobby has something of a reputation as a haven for introverts with limited social skills. It was something I did for many years as a teenager and young adult possibly, as was suggested at the time, to the detriment of my studies or professional career. It was a distraction, something to focus my mental energies on, got me through a rather strained time where hormones and personal confidence were in opposition and, if nothing else, allowed me to avoid the rattle and blather of the television.

The room I describe in the story is based on a bed-sit I occupied for a while, as a postgraduate student in what seems a thousand years ago. It was a large space at the top of the house, and cluttered with a fair selection of electronic junk. I spent a lot of time there, far too much of it fiddling with the radio equipment, and even equipped my bicycle with a tall aerial to talk to other Hams while cycling the four miles to and from the University.

I still hold a valid Amateur Radio licence – callsign G8TYY – although I have not appeared on the airwaves in several decades. Most of the junk has been disposed of, over the years, although there are a few things on a top shelf I might just dig out one of these years.